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THE ORIGINAL UNIVERSE

NUMBER 7

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The Original Universe is published approximately 6 times a year on a bi-monthly schedule. Sample issues are available for \$3 Canadian, about the same cost as many comics. You can also subscribe at a cost of \$12 per year.

The zine is also available free for *The Usual*. The Usual consists of several options:

- i) LOC (Letter of Comment): This is the most common method, and recommended even if you use the other methods as well. This is simply a letter to the editor giving feedback on the issue itself, maybe feedback to other contributors as well. This letter can be sent in e-mail.

There are two content rules: a) try to be interesting. B) don't start a fight with another or several other members. I simply won't publish those.

- ii) Cover art: I always appreciate this. Keep in mind not to use copyrighted characters without proper attribution, and keep art to PG-13 at most.
- iii) Interior art: "fillos" are a longtime tradition for zines: small illustrations to break up sections of text.
- iv) Articles: if you write something to share with fellow readers, I'll print it. Please keep article submissions clean.
- v) Zine trades: If you produce a zine, I'll be glad to exchange a copy of this one for yours.

To remain on the mailing list you have to contribute *The Usual* at least once every 2 issues. Failure to do so gets you bumped from mailings. You'll be reminded if you're close to that point.

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Next Deadline: **November 12, 2008.**

Credits in Editor's Corner.

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All characters (c) to their respective companies.

EDITOR'S CORNER

Some big-deal stuff to discuss in this editorial, so I'll just jump into it!

In my last e-mail to you all I spoke about 'life issues' that slowed me from getting the zine out sooner. I should have called them 'apartment issues':

Another tenant in my building, one on the same axis I am, keeps a filthy home. He's mean to his pet (I've suggested someone report him to the SPCA for Animal Cruelty), leading to further filth.

The result: he developed cockroaches. The city in their infinite 'wisdom' only fumigates one apartment at a time, so they flee to the next untreated place. Because of this, after more than 15 years I saw roaches in my own place.

Saying that I hate these bugs is an understatement. Getting them because another tenant caused them is even worse.

I had to empty every cupboard in my kitchen before the exterminator came here. I'm still putting things back still over a month later, thus the delays.

I had more misfortune in the middle of the Montreal Comic Con (I'll mention the con later):

I've had a composite tooth for years now, because the original broke off. Well Saturday evening after I got home from the con, it also broke off!

Fortunately my dentist was available to replace it a week later, but I had to relearn how to eat from the sides of my mouth until then. You would think that wasn't fun; you'd be right.

At least the days of dentures as a solution are over... I asked my dentist flat out if I'd have to consider them in a few years. He said no.

Still: I'm hoping that bad stuff doesn't come to me in threes here.

August and September were eventful months for my family: early August was my mom's birthday, my youngest sister at the end, and my sister Randy in mid-September. Also, early this month was my folks' 42nd (!) wedding anniversary.

Only I (May) and my dad (November) have birthdays at other times of the year.

I have yet to hear back from that producer I spoke of a few issues ago. His idea I guess wasn't concrete.

I let other writing projects stall while I waited for him. It's time to get back to work on them. If he ever contacts me again I'll deal with it then.

Something good: the week of September 12th I got my Asus EEE laptop PC from a bank promotion! This machine is tiny: the screen is 7" (enough for writing and e-mail) and the whole system weighs about 1 kilogram (around 2.5 lbs). Even open I can easily hold it in one hand.

It has a network connection and a wireless card, so either way I can get it online.

Proof that I'm a tech-head: within a few minutes of getting it I already started plans to put another version of Linux on it and made further plans to customize it. It'll soon be set-up to my tastes. (Note: I borked the install. Now I have to fix it.)

The best thing about it: I now have something to bring anywhere to write with.

Speaking of writing:

On September 16th I got the e-mail reminder that sign-ups for NaNoWriMo start in early October. This will be the 10th Anniversary for them.

It will also mark the 6th year for me.

I'm hoping this year to make the 5th victory for me. I was hoping to go 5 for 5 last year, but taking care of Boots at the end of his life was more important to me at the time.

This year may well end up as one of my least developed: all that exists of it so far is the notion in my brain. No character names, or rough character sketches, just the plot idea now. That's viewed in Chris Baty's book about the competition (No Plot? No Problem!) as ideal. I'll only start to develop it in mid-October. Heck, I don't even have a title notion yet!

At least I'll now be able to enjoy the free wifi at Central Station during writing jams!

Hopeful news on my friend Emru: on September 16, he had his bone marrow transplant. Thanks to heavy chemotherapy before, his immune system right now is nil. It will be some time before he's OK enough to see how well it worked.

He's not out of the woods yet, but we're definitely breathing again.

I've learned that his body accepted the transplant sooner than anticipated. That's another good sign.

The cover for this issue was drawn by member Olivia Arduini. Olivia also drew the comix I reviewed last issue, and she puts out a zine I've mentioned here also, **HSS Reader**. You can learn more about her and her zine at her blog (hssreader.blogspot.com) .

Speaking of cover art: I need more. After Olivia's piece this issue, I have no others. Shawn Surface (the artist last issue) has offered to draw more in the future, but I don't only want to make him work on donations. ☺ We have other members here who are artists. I hope I can get stuff from them also [/not so subtle hint].

Remember: art for the zine counts as The Usual.

Also talking of content guides: you'll notice that I no longer sent a reminder e-mail of the deadline. I'll send one 2 weeks before future deadlines.

The deadline for members is in bold text every issue on the Table of Contents page, right inside of the cover. We're all adults here, and we all understand what deadlines mean. I sent you all reminders during the first 6 issues as part of helping the zine grow; now hopefully you can be more accustomed to the practice.

I won't harp on this. I'm not trying to lecture when we do this for our own amusement anyway.

My Facebook fan page for this zine grew a lot in fans since last issue. Two from England are a mystery to me (neither has replied to my query yet), but most are as far as I know legit. Now to get the newcomers here!

I've begun to get my task management for organized. For some time I've been attempting to use the *Getting Things Done* methodology. I finally got the original book to ensure that I was doing it right.

I still don't have it working 100%. I've been making large lists of tasks (thanks to the Gmail GTD extension for Firefox) but I haven't yet succeeded in completing as many as I'd like. I'll get the hang of it over time though, I hope.

Update: I'm finding that setting up a private GTD wiki was better. I'm getting more tasks done with it – and I now see that I was still making my actions too broad before, so they still ended up untouched. I'm getting to them now!

This editorial isn't as long as I expected it to be, but just as well... I have a lot of other material for this zine anyway! The 'Conversation With Liana K.' will appear next issue. I hit a time crunch due to some PC headaches, and I wanted to get this out for early October.

Also next issue: the goodie I hoped to have for this one will now be deferred to number 8. Unfortunately in my rush on this one and other preparations I didn't get it ready yet. Apologies, but the wait will be worth it.

Avatar Rebirth WHAT CAME BEFORE:

In 1999, the evil Professor Malick tried to torture the secret of Avatar's seeming immortality from him. John Foster, then the host of the Avatar entity, chose to end his life rather than reveal the secret. He died while Avatar fled.

In 2002, school student Billy Combers was killed in a car accident. Avatar reluctantly made him the Offer to be his new Host; Billy was the youngest person he made the Offer to.

Billy was a little freaked-out by the whole situation, but knew he was all his mom had ever since his dad died during the Gulf War. He had an idea what to do next also...

Billy was ready to abuse the powers he'd been given by using them to attack Nick and his gang. Avatar stopped it immediately. Punishment was coming...

Now:

“This is simple: just imagine floating up.”

Avatar and Billy found a junkyard to practice in. Even better, except for the dog watching it (it couldn't talk!) the yard was devoid of witnesses. A moment of concentration, and Billy had long blond hair and wore a purple unitard. If anyone DID see him, they wouldn't recognize him.

Billy looked upwards. A few seconds later, his body lifted off the ground; inches at first, then much more. As the ground dropped below his feet his stomach lurched a bit, but that let up soon as he got used to it.

“Excellent. The most important step is getting off the ground. Now we can work on movement. Concentrate on the flight plan in your mind right now. Focus on moving as I show you, and your body will do the movements.”

Billy saw a set of directions in his head. He concentrated on them, and within a few seconds he began moving in them. As he did he began to move through the air. Slowly and with uncertainty at first, then he picked up momentum. He began to move around in the sky faster.

“Not bad. You are a quick study for this, it seems.”
Through their mental connection Billy felt Avatar's appreciation. *“I want you to practice this for several minutes, to get accustomed to it.”*

Billy swooped in the air and dove, as well as zipped around. As he grew more confident being in the air he became less reluctant to fly and float so far off the ground. He performed rolls and movements in the air with great amusement.

“The only negative I can see is hopefully one we won't have to face for long: we need to face more obstacles in the future, ones you will have greater need of maneuverability in. Hopefully you won't need that any time soon, but it's best to be prepared.”

“This will be your task for a future lesson Billy: to find a location with greater obstacles for your future training sessions.”

Billy paid more attention to the voice in his head than to his environment. He drifted into a junk pile, crushed cars and other heavy items. Their pile wasn't very steady; bumping into them tipped the pile over with a loud groan.

The junkyard dog was attracted by the sound and raced over, ending up underneath the falling pile. It barked away, oblivious to the danger.

Avatar's tone took on deep concern. *“An innocent can NOT be killed here! Billy, you have strength and control due to the abilities I provide. Now is time to test them!”*

Billy swooped down below the pile and raised his arms and hands up to meet it. As it landed he was thrown downward, momentum taking over. It carried him further down, though he didn't get worried. Avatar said this would work, so it would. He used what energy he would have spent on worry to instead concentrate on the weight above him.

He dropped down until his feet were just above the dog. It growled at first, but as it got covered by the large shadow of the approaching weight it began to whimper.

The fall stopped, and the scrap began to slowly rise, with Billy below it. Within a minute he had raised it back to its original height and put it back in its original place.

Despite trying to seem unimpressed, he had to admit: this was.

This feeling didn't last due to a few words in his head: *“Good work, but the lesson is over. Please get back to the ground immediately.”*

He dragged his trail as best he could, slowly navigating himself to land. Seconds after he did, his features changed back to his own.

“Your powers are now turned off again... until you need them or we have another lesson.”

This wasn't true. Avatar hid his memory of the sad day that John Foster had used them to end his life... he hoped that Billy didn't realize this fact too soon. For now this was the best way to discipline him.

“Aw, man! Do you really have to do this?”

“You chose to abuse the Gift, so you pay the price. I said you were not a good fit for me, you just proved me right.”

Billy snorted. *“Why did you go with me then, if you didn't want to?”*

Billy heard an exasperated sigh in his head. *“I can contest the choice, but ultimately I have not got the final decision. My superiors have the final choice. They have*

their reasons, but they don't reveal them to me. I just hope they haven't made an error this time. They never do, but I still wonder...

“So they have a plan, and I'm part of it? And you don't know why? Cool!” Billy strode away, his gait smugger. Free will wasn't at play for his keeper!

Avatar sighed.

+ + +

In its formless space, a malevolent entity stirred.

“The abilities have been used again, and for a longer time. They were easy to track.”

The entity still needed a Host to manifest on Earth. The choice was one it could see appearing as it searched. The potential Host shone like a lit candle

It began to make its way.

“Soon...”

+ + +

“This is a good office.” The rental agent said. “I've never heard a complaint from the tenants I've had here in the past Mr...”

“Malick. Algernon Malick.” Those who knew him would find his current charm and good nature disturbing, but this agent didn't know. “I suspect I won't be here longer than 2 or three months, but this locale will definitely do.”

“I don't know the size of your staff will be -”

“Just me and my assistant.”

The agent raised an eyebrow. “Only two? Won't this space seem too, well... spacious to you?”

“This will be sufficient for my plans.” The professor handed over the briefcase he'd been holding. “My rental fee plus two months rent is here, as promised.”

The agent took the case and nodded. “I hope you enjoy these facilities. If there are any problems, don't hesitate to call me at this number.” The agent passed a business card then put out a hand to shake. “Nice doing business with you.” The agent left.

Professor Malick continued to smile until he heard the outer door shut. Then his face took on the look of malice that many were accustomed to. He opened a cell phone he'd had within his pants.

The phone rang. When a voice answered on the other end he spoke. “My plan worked. I now have this location. Have Janson head over with the equipment I need.” He closed the phone and looked around.

“Soon, Avatar. Soon.”

+ + +

NEXT: Surprising relations and the plot thickens.



Cary Nord. Beefcake for the ladies. :)



CONVENTION REPORT: MONTREAL COMICCON

This report won't be as long as my Toronto one (not as many guests), but long enough! It will also be full of photos and sketches. This show was much smaller than PCCC but still fun!

Herb Trimpe and Howard Chaykin were seated next to each other. They were the biggest guests of the con, so that made sense. I interviewed Howard



Michel Lacombe

Chaykin for a future zine, but I ran out of power for it after;



Howard Chaykin from another con. This photo is better than mine!

I'll have to interview Herb in e-mail. He'll be reading this issue of the zine. I had a few extra copies of issue 6, so I gave them to him and Mr. Chaykin on the Sunday.

Meeting many of the guests was like a big Toronto reunion: as well as Mr. Trimpe I saw Tom Fowler, Ramon Perez, J Torres (those two next to each other), Cary Nord, Karl Kershl, Steve Molnaro

(who asked me if Dario was there too!), and Yannick Paquette (on the Saturday only)..

Among the other guests were Wes Craig, Kate “Red” Bradley, Cameron Stewart, The Wacky Pin guys (locals that I see at Con*Cept), Michel Lacombe (an inker), Serge Lapointe (also), Eric Theriault (who I know), Sirkowski (I



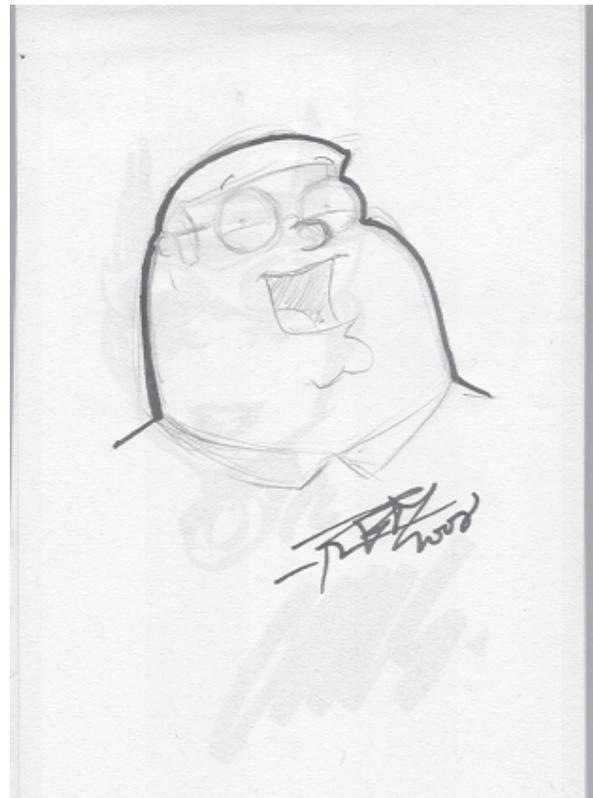
Steve Molnar art

met him here in 2002) and Dale Eaglesham (*JsOA*. I also originally met him then).

The Place Bonaventure convention centre provided a large area. As a result it had a large space for dealers, and there were many. The second half of the room provided a large area for the guests arranged in a table circle, but that led to a cavernous empty space. I sent e-mail to the organizers about making discussion panels there; they help buyers get more interested in the guests (making them more interested in getting their books from dealers). Also, they would help to break up the long stretches of time with nothing happening... I was there from 19:30 AM to 7 PM on Saturday alone. That made for a long day!

I've had no replies from them yet, unfortunately.

It proved to be productive to this zine though: I brought a stack of promotional flyers to place on the freebie table. Many of them were taken – but I know that doesn't translate to automatic successes. Still: I got one definite new member there (I've seen her now at many local conventions), and I gave a copy of the flyer to my friend Pam Berlin. Matthew knows her too; I'm not sure how many of you also do. I've known Pam for many years; her former beau Philippe Boule was a member of *Comicopia* many years ago and a fellow member and DM of *Apocalypse*.



Kate “Red” Bradley art

Why meeting her here matters to the zine: she's an English teacher at Vanier college here. Some of her students are also comicbook readers, so we may get more interested parties from there.

Speaking of local CEGEPs (that's similar to Grade 13 outside Quebec): both Steve Molnar and Wes Craig (he draws a lot for *Image*, and he's taking over the art on *Superman: Reign* with issue 7) are graduates from a comic art program at the Dawson College CEGEP. This program definitely began after I graduated from there; it might have begun after Greg's time also (feel free to correct me); I bought a comicbook he was part of there – *Drawn Inc.* I think – but that I believe was a club project. Greg's name was familiar to them, but only a little.

MOVIE REVIEWS

National Treasure 2: Book of Secrets (DVD): Indiana Jones starred in comicbooks; another similar adventure fits.

This movie has a schizophrenic review reaction from me. On the plus side: I love adventure capers, and this film delivers that in spades! This film is a sequel to the original National Treasures, so the original cast/characters return. Benjamin Franklin Gates (Nicholas Cage) still searches for lost treasures. He and former love Abigail Chase (Diane Kruger) have split up. She kept their house; he's now living with his father (Jon Voight). Gates friend and explorer partner Riley (Justin Bartha) is on the book circuit with a book about the previous film adventures.

Into this mixture a Southern man named Mitch Wilkinson (Ed Harris) arrives with purported proof that Gates' great-grandfather was part of the conspiracy to assassinate Abraham Lincoln, based on a lost page from John Wilkes Booth's diary. Gates has to find the other missing 18 pages of the diary, which involves an alleged secret book given to US Presidents, a secret native city of gold, and Ben's divorced mother Emily Appleton (Helen Mirren)...

Yes, it is complex! There are incredible locations, fantastic action... this is stuff that I greatly enjoyed.

On the negative side: I'm a writer, and some of the character interactions felt forced: Ben and Abigail had no chemistry together (Diane is nice to look at, granted), but at the end of the film they decide to get back together, never mind Abby's new boyfriend she's shown close to earlier in the film. Likewise: Jon Voight and Helen Mirren's characters have been divorced for 32 years, haven't even spoken in as long... yet they seem to get back together in the end. They too have no romantic chemistry together. Both hookups feel forced as a result.

This DVD was put out with the film alone in an effort to scoop film pirates. Result: no extras whatsoever. To me this is a waste of the DVD medium.

Open Season (DVD): As an animated film this fits into the comicbooks for young folks theme, though it's one with gags that adults will get.



Yannick Paquette

800 lb bear Boog (Martin Lawrence) has long been domesticated by park ranger Beth (Debra Messing). He rescues a fast-talking mule deer (Ashton Kutcher) from crazy hunter Shaw (Gary Sinise). Boog acts in a way that Beth thinks indicates he needs to go back to the wild, so she sends him back – only a few days before hunting season begins.

Elliot tries to help him, making them an unusual buddy pair. Eventually fish out of water Boog adjusts and leads to a defeat of the hunters.

Let's start with the positives about this disc: the animated menu is fantastic. Once I saw the film I recognized some of the bits, but many seemed new. The voice cast was star-studded. As well as those I mentioned above, there were also Jane Krakowki

(Elaine from **Ally McBeal**), Jon Favreau, Billy Connolly and Patrick Warburton (**The Tick**, Putty from **Seinfeld**). The disc also has a lot of special features.

Now the negatives: the CGI is strange-looking and disturbing. The stylistics would actually work better as traditional 2-D cell animation; in fact it would be better suited to it entirely. The story didn't really add anything new either. There were too many predictable things like "the wiener dog has a German accent". Apparently most adults loathe this film. At least, if they remember it; I've already forgotten it myself.

Among the extras is Wheel of Fortune Forest Edition. This should really be called charades – but whatever it's called

it's HARD! I was struggling just to guess 2 of 8 answers, and even then I only came close to them.

PIXAR has the lock on CGI films with decent stories. I think this one will join **Robots** as a failed non-**PIXAR** one.

+ + +

This is a small film review section, but the next one already seems like it will be longer!



Wes Craig



MORE SIGHTS OF THE COMICCON



Tom Fowler

Karl Kersch art



COMIC COMMENTS

This section will be shorter than usual. There's a lot of other content to make up for it though!

LEGION OF THREE WORLDS – WOW!

THIS was how a mini-series should start! Granted I'm a *LSH* fan, so I'm a little biased. Still Geoff and George made a good book.

The first issue only shows action with the original adult Legion (the DnA and current Legions are given a panel each), but right away Geoff Johns' knowledge of the history of the characters is obvious: the very first thing he uses harkens back to R.J. Brande actually being Durlan, and the father of Legionnaire Chameleon Boy. The character in the now defunct animated series called Brande "dad". I'd forgotten this bit of continuity then after so many years. With it now brought back, I remember it again with great clarity.

One negative for me was the reminder that Superboy Prime (**DC Comics** seems to have rights to this name again) is an annoying psychopath. He never grew up in his years away so he acts his mental age – he's just not compelling to me.

Based on the images of each team here, there could be a LOT of characters! That won't be a problem for Perez, but I have to wonder if there'll be enough space in 5 issues to do them all justice. One good thing here is the idea that they exist in different places. Maybe they now all exist on different multiple Earths; that would make the other versions more tangible, and the current version easier to phase away.

The original Legion may now be too hardened after a xenophobic war to be the heroes of the

UFP now granted... they aren't old but they are too old to be teen heroes anymore. I think the second group would be fun (with Quislet and Blok added, mind you. I think Quislet and Gates would have great scenes together, and Blok is a great character). The current group under Shooter are improving, but they still have a long way to go to be a great read.

WARREN ELLIS... DISAPPOINTMENT X2

When the first issue of *Transmetropolitan* came out, I was hooked by his writing. I was actually mentioned in the letter column of issue 7, and I sought out his work from that point on.

I've mentioned here many times how unsatisfied I am by his current *Thunderbolts* squad. That title is on the fence for me. Now a *second* title he's writing is there as well, and will very likely fall: *Astonishing X-Men*.

Granted following Joss Whedon isn't easy, but this book has many changes now, most of them bad:

1) The art

This is the one good thing. Simone Bianchi was fantastic on *Shining Knight* at **DC** a few years ago, and his work here is no less impressive.

(An aside: at the convention Yannick Paquette confirmed for me that Simone is in Italy. That may be old news, but if so I forgot it before.)

Unfortunately the next point spoiled it for me.

2) WAY too many words

Comicbooks are a visual medium, but here Warren writes too many words for each character

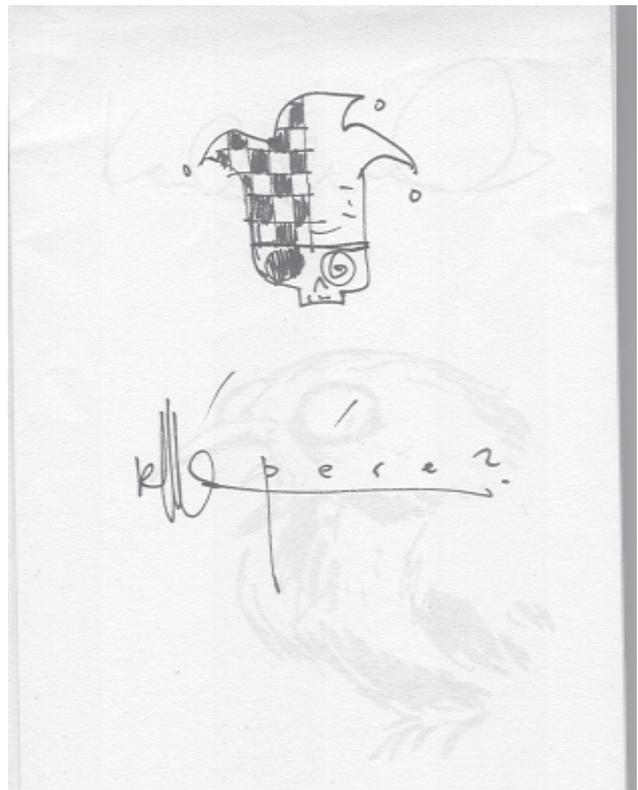
to say. As a result, many, MANY word balloons cover the artwork, nearly to the point of leaving readers breathless trying to catch up. It's claustrophobic at times.

Fortunately I'm not the claustrophobic type, but I still see the problem.

3) The characters are changed

Every writer brings their own spin to the interpretation of characters, but Warren here has made them *too* different. He changed the way they speak and act around in nearly every case.

For example: Emma Frost is still the ice maiden of the team — but now she and Ororo sound the same. If they weren't drawn next to their words, we wouldn't know who said them. Worse: they sound exactly like Songbird in *Thunderbolts* now!

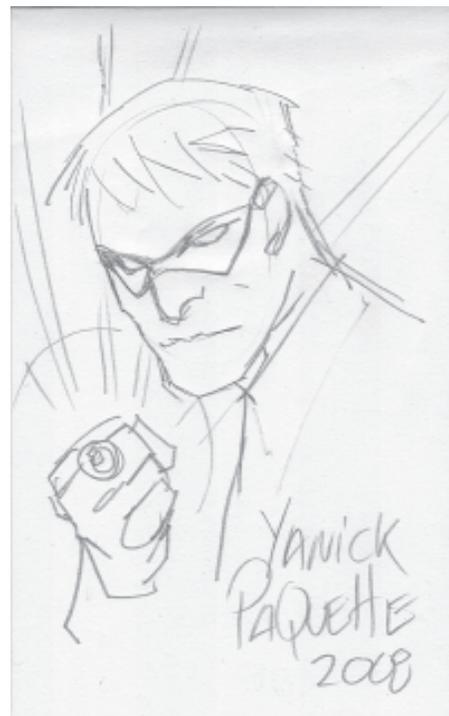


Ramon K. Perez

Is this title now a part of the regular continuity? These X-Men are now in San Francisco with the rest of the crew, as they are in the other books. Anyway, I may well end up dropping this



Sirkowsky art



Yannick Paquette art

HEY KIDS: LETTERS!

Hello again JAB.

Just a few comments on TOU#6. I hope that having my picture in there doesn't scare off too many readers. I was surprised to see myself in there like that, but at least it was a con picture so I guess it falls within the scope of the zine. There is one important typo in the issue that I wish to correct and that is the name of the recent Planet of the Apes comic series from MR comics. The title of that series was "Revolution on the Planet of the Apes" and not "Revenge of the Planet of the Apes". The reason the correction is important is that it really is a series (6 issues) that any Apes fan should be looking out for. The series expands upon the events that take place between the last two movies in the series (Conquest and Battle). Asides from the great story arc and great back stories, there are lots of references and nods to the history of the original films.

I stand corrected. -JaB

Next up is the new Dark Knight movie. In my last correspondence, I mentioned how I was looking forward to this movie and how Hollywood has been "getting it right" for a change lately. Well even those successes have nothing on DK. I was totally blown away by this movie and did something I haven't done in 25 years and that was to go see a movie twice in it's original theater run. As most other people I've talked to seem to concur, it was all Heath Ledger's performance from beginning to end. I assumed most of the accolades I was hearing prior to, and immediately after the release was just lip service and hype (talk of an Oscar performance, and all). But no. This really was a Great performance and one that will live on for a long time. I will be seeing this movie again soon.

I just got the Iron Man DVD. This will be next. - JaB

See you at Con*cept!

Dario

Lloyd Penney

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September 13, 2008

Dear Jeff from Juniper Falls:

Many thanks for a copy of the sixth The Original Universe. I'm close to the deadline, so I hope I can still get it in. Weekend, don't fail me! I'm spending my daytimes at my new full-time job, at Tri-Ad Graphics / Southern Graphics Systems. Let's see what I can say.

More pages of text than anything else yet; I'd say you did well. ☺ - JaB

I have been trying to scale back the various features of my FaceBook page, but more and more, I am finding old friends from high school and my early days in fandom. FaceBook and LiveJournal are just too vital in communicating these days.

Several of our fellow zinners have also found me on Facebook as well... and we have the Fan page. - JaB
George Carlin tried his best to stop from being sucked into the establishment he railed against. I'm old enough to remember Carlin as clean-shaven and dressed in a black suit and skinny tie. Dropping that initial image helped him become the counter-culture icon he became.

It used to be there were a number of comic conventions in the Toronto area, usually run by Dragon Lady Comics. When Dragon Lady changed their focus to what they call paper memorabilia, Hobbystar and Paradise Comics seem to have filled the gap. So many people are dissatisfied with the Hobbystar SFX/Fan eXpo event, and I think Paradise Comics Comicon might have done better if they hadn't been on the same weekend as Polaris 22.

They also need the guest list of Fan eXpo. - JaB

Yup, I know Ron Kasman (Hi, Ron)... I remember a quiet evening in 1982 when I proposed to Yvonne, but Ron may have been there when we made the general announcement.
So he said. - JaB

Sounds like the convention itself was fun, and I know some people were forced to make the choice between the two conventions on at the same time. Polaris was a fun time, and we found things to do, and the physical middle of the convention had a group of banquet tables in which to sit, chat with friends, have some lunch and work away on other projects. That layout suited us just fine, and we met so many old friends in passing.

This may be heretical, but when it comes to a convention, I've never gone to a convention based on who the guests are. I didn't meet any of the guests at Polaris, mostly because I still work evenings, and I haven't seen any of the shows they star in. The people at the con, the friends who show up, make the con for me.

The Shuster Awards will not be given out at Paradise next year? Is there another convention they've adopted, or will there just be a general announcement? I heard that one of the Paradise organizers moved to Hobbystar, so he might

have taken the Shusters with him. Will this mean there's only one comicon in Toronto next year?

Nope, they have both... but the Shusters were a separate event this year. - JaB

The first Narnia movie was quite enjoyable, and the second one was, too. Those who know the Narnia series know that the Pevensie children rarely appear in future books, so I hope that people will focus on the great stories, and not the by-now familiar characters.

I wonder how they'll handle the final book, where they supposedly perish in our world. - JaB

The letter column, and my own letter...Creation Conventions no longer do business in Ontario because they were found not to be paying the government the taxes on the appearance fees they pay to the actors who appear at their conventions. However, Creation still runs an annual convention in Vancouver. I wonder if a short note to the BC taxation department and the Ministry of Labour there might rid Canada of Creation once and for all?

We can hope. - JaB

I've yet to receive my contributor's copy of The Drop. This is four voicework projects I've worked on where the final product on CD has yet to appear. I can imagine that like websites, the novelty of starting a new project is replaced with the drudgery of having to complete it. I pester the producers from time to time; I hope they'll get the hint eventually, and finish off the disk. I want to take samples off them for my demodisk, which I hope to get recorded some time in 2009.

The back page...I see the Montreal Comicon was on just last weekend. How did it go? Small conventions are lot of fun, too. With cons in mind, we'll see you at Con*cept. Yvonne is readying some interesting space and science programming, and Lee Knight is getting all the programming ready for the con. We should all get final notice of our panel schedule soon, I hope.

I just did too. I'm potentially on 7 panels. Wow! The Comicon report is here. - JaB

We'll be in Montréal October 17, and should get to the hotel around 1pm, whereupon we will be taking in the tour of the Palais de Congress scheduled for that time. See you later that day!

I'll see you at that tour as well. - JaB

Yours, Lloyd Penny

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Hi gang! Issue 6 had a lot of cool stuff. I'll soon make a t-shirt with the cover art. Hopefully I'll have it for Con*Cept this year...



Eric Theriault art

Re: SDCC Snippets... I don't like Prime either. I hate calling him that name right off; that's the name of a great Ultraverse hero that Len Strazewski created. The DC villain is just a brat with the powers of Superman. Actually I don't like the Gizmo character on the **Teen Titans** cartoon for similar personality reasons. / **DC Comics** made the Archie heroes 'radioactive' n their **Impact** line. Hopefully the return of the originals will help.

I have even more need to get a new black toner for my printer: photos don't seem to come out well on the printer I'm using at work.

LETTERS

Percy: Re: Avatar... this is why my prose is still in amateur press and not pro; I still have much to learn and improve. Many of your questions will be answered later in the story, mind you. There is a justification for everything. / Re: Wonder Woman... I have a link to a blog about her on the Facebook Fan page listing all the reasons she isn't so great now. / Re: Barry Allen and the Martian Manhunter... I guess **DC** chose to kill the real Silver Age starter in *Final Crisis*. / Re: your review of *Cloverfield*... your review is actually more thorough than mine!

Lloyd: I've not really been athletic either. High school gym and amateur wrestling training there still gives me the sweats. / When I began *Comicopia* in 1990 the entire membership was here in Montreal. That changed over the years; who knows what'll happen in the future with this zine. / As far as getting Canadian history wrong at **Marvel**, and having Northstar as a former member of the FLQ, they also had him use swear words in Québec in a regular published book. Average Americans might not notice, but here the title was likely boycotted.

Dario: As an aside: *So you think you can dance Canada* has a contestant who's your namesake. Guess you'll watch it regularly now. ☺ / Re: Ubuntu Linux: my attempt to install a version on my EEE PC seems to have gone badly wrong. At the moment I can only use it on a live USB stick. / Re: Recounting of old "classics"... I'll do that from time to time. / Re: POTA remakes... I think nearly anyone could make a better version than the dreadful one a few years ago! / Re: SDCC... neither of us may be able to attend someday if attendance is limited before we can do it.

Matthew: Re: Avatar... Firestorm and Captain Marvel were inspirations. Nova currently has a similar resonance, as you suggest. / I don't understand what you mean about Geoff Johns crippling characters. Examples, please? / Prime as a forgettable character I've already spoken of. / One of the few interesting things that might come of Barry Allen's return: he's a forensic scientist; writers today can use that. / One strange thing about the new Iron Man title: his first villain is trying to take over the world with a computer operating system. That OS: **Linux**. Ho-kay...

That wraps this LOC.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey

Coming in issue 8:

Lots of stuff again!:

- * Avatar: Rebirth Part 4
- * The delayed A Conversation with Liana K
- * some goodies for the delayed from last issue originally, delayed again.
- * letters!

Of course, there may be other stuff by other members.

With issue 8, it would be cool to have a large letters section again (hint, hint). Also, some art from artist members would also be good.

+++

A "shorter" LOC section this issue, but there's a lot of content anyway.

See you in about 60,

JaB

TODO LIST FOR 2008

- Write More Mutants and Masterminds works
- GenCon 2010, maybe
- Con*Cept 2008
- Anticipation 2009 (I'm pre-registered now!)

TODO (HOPEFULLY!) SOMEDAY

- San Diego Comicon (someday)

ZINE EXCHANGES

None for this issue

You have __ issue(s) left for The Usual. Then you're off the mailing list. Please avoid that sad fact.

If you're a subscriber you have __ issue(s) left of that.